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ABSTRACT

This report sets out to establish the need for and to define a type of adult education for the socialization of adults. It arises from the meeting of a steering group responsible for the "Adult Education and Social Change" project, which studied educational practices relating to the long-term unemployed and older people. The key points listed epitomize the steering group's approach and define "a socializing type of adult education." Aimed at those with responsibility for social policy within Member States of the Council of Europe, Part I states the case for an autonomous system of adult education. It summarizes the philosophy underlying this education as observed during study visits and indicates responses adult education has to offer to the social challenges of the present time. Finally, this section proposes an outline for political action designed to systematize this type of education and provide it with institutional, financial, structural, methodological, and other forms of autonomy. Part II outlines, in the light of the topic groups' field observations, some forms that such education might take and the successful practices that might serve as relevant guidelines. Topics include the following: target populations; education made to measure; managing and organizing a flexible education system; strategic guidelines; an open education; learner-centered action; a holistic approach to education; adapting resources to adult education; giving a central role to evaluation; and professionalizing adult educators. (YLB)

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For a socialising type of adult education

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COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL COOPERATION

ADULT EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

FOR A SOCIALISING TYPE OF ADULT EDUCATION

Transforming adult education into an autonomous system for the continuous resocialisation of adults

REPORT

by

Gérald BOGARD
Consultant

Strasbourg 1992

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
PREAMBLE		**5**
KEY POINTS		**7**
INTRODUCTION		**11**
PART I:	**THE NEED FOR AN AUTONOMOUS SYSTEM OF ADULT EDUCATION: POLICY GUIDELINES**	**12**
1.	Approaches to adult education: specificities and convergences	12
2.	The demand for education, an indicator of the varied process of social change	13
3.	The nature of the new social requirements	14
4.	Cultural distance and inter-personal capacity of individuals	14
5.	The reshaping of basic social skills	15
6.	The information and communication society	16
7.	Loss of proximity and deterioration of social fabrics	16
8.	The need for autonomy as a response to the reconstitution of social fabrics	18
9.	The concept of socialisation	20
10.	Permanent socialisation?	21
11.	The strategic dimension of cognitive processes	22
12.	Bringing education closer to adults	22
13.	Who should be responsible for such education?	23
14.	An energetic policy	24

PART II: INNOVATORY INITIATIVES IN ADULT EDUCATION. Guide to good practice. 25

1. Target populations **25**

* Who are the target populations?
* Unsuitability of targeting by priority groups.

2. Education made to measure **26**

* Fostering strategies of change.
* Encouraging an outward-looking approach.
* Rooting training courses in their environment.
* Broadening the objectives so as to include socialisation.
* Transcending the individual/collective polarisation of objectives.
* Combating illiteracy.
* Training in new technologies.
* Encouraging the acquisition of basic social skills.
* Creating motivation.

3. Managing and organising a flexible education system **29**

* The need for proximity.
* Organising a multi-partnership.
* Decompartmentalising education through twofold integration.
* Rethinking the concept of education centre.
* Decentralising.
* Networking of initiatives.
* The community development dimension.

4. Strategic guidelines **32**

* The role of the administration.
* Guidance tools.
* Project management.
* Educational engineering.

5. An open education **33**

* Motivation.
* Demands as a starting point.
* A different way of organising work.
* Reception: a decisive educational stage.
* Recognition of existing attainments.

6. Learner-centred action 35

* Eliminating the subject-based approach.
* Programme flexibility.
* Building on experience.
* Enhancement of intellectual tools.
* Working on oral expression.
* Working on conceptions and values.
* Education for the whole person.

7. A holistic approach to education 38

* Making adults feel responsible.
* The concept of leader.
* Learning by discovery.
* Using group dynamics.
* Individualisation.
* The return to project-based learning.
* Developing multi-resource systems.
* Encouraging creativity in adult education.

8. Adapting resources to adult education 40

* Flexible duration.
* Suitable premises.
* Using the mass media.
* Ensuring equality.
* Providing sufficient resources.

9. Giving a central role to evaluation 42

* Evaluating people.
* Evaluating actions.
* Evaluating policies.

10. Professionalising adult educators 43

* Different professional categories.
* The question of voluntary work.
* The multiple functions of adult educators.
* Professionalism.
* Tutoring.
* Professional status and career.
* Professionalisation.
* A role for universities.
* What kind of training for adult educators?
* Clearing houses and resource centres.

CONCLUSIONS 48

PREAMBLE

At the request of the CDCC, the Council of Europe set up a project entitled "Adult Education and Social Change". This involved the observation of educational practices relating to two sections of the population: (a) the long-term unemployed and (b) older people.

The first step was to set up a topic group on each of these categories.

Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Malta, the Netherlands, the Nordic Council of Ministers (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden), Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom and Yugoslavia participated in the group on the long-term unemployed from the outset. Italy took part as an observer, and Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland joined later.

Belgium (Flemish Community), Cyprus, Germany ("Land" of North Rhine-Westphalia), the Holy See, Italy, Netherlands, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and Yugoslavia took part in the group on older people, which was later joined by Hungary.

The steering group responsible for the project considered that these two population categories posed significant challenges in all member States as a result of their very existence and the questions this raised, particularly in terms of the need for new forms of solidarity. Indeed, from the standpoint of social cohesion, the topic groups considered these two categories to be the ones most vulnerable to the effects of marginalisation and social exclusion. It should be noted that attention was focussed essentially on the educational arrangements available for these adults, whom traditional systems of adult education usually ignore.

It is clear that the social policies of most of the countries concerned are heavily reliant on education systems to meet the needs arising from social and economic changes. It was therefore felt that an examination of the types of responses worked out by educators would prove a valuable exercise. Moreover, rather than attempting to assess the various educational practices in the light of some abstract definition of human nature or a theoretical conception of social change, it seemed preferable to assume that these practices helped to determine such change by the responses they sought to provide to the difficulties encountered by those for whom they were intended.

We drew two lessons from this activity.

The first underlay the schemes already implemented. It is connected with social change and, in particular, the skills demanded of individuals in order to adapt thereto. Everyone is affected by these changes and their consequences.

The second is connected with the schemes themselves and the new forms given to them by educational practitioners according to the concrete situations and difficulties, as well as the population groups they encounter.

It is these two lessons that enable us today to set out our conclusions on a new form of adult education (still at the drawing-board stage in the various countries) suited to the demands arising from the changes occurring in our societies. Accordingly, it is not a question of "education for the excluded", but rather of education for the socialisation of all adults, since they are all confronted with the social challenges arising from these changes. However, the situation of those in the greatest difficulty will particularly engage our attention, since it is they who need a more effective solution. In these times of general change, everyone needs this educational resocialisation. It may be assumed that whatever is devised for the most deprived groups can be more easily developed for those who are more fully integrated.

As the project draws to a close - after three years of investigation in more than twenty member States, including study visits in the majority of cases - it is possible to identify a number of basic principles for an autonomous type of adult education and suggest ways in which these could be systematically implemented in most countries.

This report, arising from the steering group's meeting in Strasbourg in June 1991, sets out to establish the need for, then to define, this type of adult education, which has already been outlined in various earlier publications. The first part of the report is aimed more at those with responsibility for social policy within member States; it seeks to summarise the philosophy underlying this education as observed by us in the field during our study visits. It also tries to indicate the responses we feel adult education has to offer to the social challenges of our time. Finally, this section of the report proposes an outline for political action designed to systematise this type of education and provide it with institutional, financial, structural, methodological and other forms of autonomy.

Now that the case for an autonomous system of adult education has been presented, there remains the task of describing - on the basis of the on-the-spot observations of the two topic groups - the forms it might take and hence the practices which might serve as relevant guidelines. Our goal in Part II is therefore to make a random (and hence non-exhaustive) selection of sound practices from among the various schemes and to list the main aspects of the system, which it will be for the practitioners to develop more extensively in the field.

Moreover, we have put together some "key points" which epitomise our approach and defined what we mean by "a socialising type of adult education".

KEY POINTS

*1. - In the particular socio-economic context of the industrial revolution, it proved necessary to establish an education system for children and adolescents. Later, other socio-economic contexts created new professional demands, and these in turn led to the autonomisation of technical and professional education and, more recently, of vocational training. Today, the emergence of a new society should prompt us to re-examine the linkages and dovetailings between these different systems. It should also lead us to construct an adult education system that responds to certain outstanding questions raised by this society. For these reasons, the main conclusion of the topic groups is that it is necessary to make adult education autonomous.

*2. - Present-day societies are caught up in a general rearrangement of modes of social regulation which accompanies both trans-national and infra-national movements. Social protection systems are affected by this in the same way as systems for producing goods and services, migratory flows and the major political, demographic and cultural balances. As producers and citizens, all adults are affected, but only some have the means to adapt to these upheavals easily, ie without specific support on a substantial scale.

*3. - Technological developments and the diversification of the forms and content of work organisation have considerably changed both the nature and conditions of work itself as well as the structure of the job market. The globalisation of the markets and the internationalisation of production have accelerated the rate of technological change, with knowledge becoming a central factor. Demographic trends and the diversification of migratory flows are upsetting the major social balances and calling systems of social regulation into question. Nation-states are faced with both the rise of regionalism and the emergence of supranational entities, while part of Europe is embarking on a transition towards democratic pluralism and a competitive market economy. Computer-based information is permeating contemporary societies, thereby modifying social relations as well as their underlying values.

*4. - At the heart of these transformations, the socialisation of individuals, and thus the socialising function of education, are affected. This observation is applicable to everyone, because everyone, as a producer and a citizen, is confronted with this need for continuous resocialisation. The need does, however, vary in nature according to the individual and the social group to which he or she belongs.

*5. - This resocialisation function is an ongoing necessity, and over-emphasis on current changes in Central and Eastern Europe might result in its being misinterpreted. It is not a question of deconstructing and then permanently reconstructing. In the East and the West, in the North and the South, the changes are economic as much as social, and they are permanent because they are radical. They demand creativity on the part of individuals and groups; and education has always been one of the main social means of fostering such creativity.

*6. - Over the last few decades, attention has been focussed on the more obvious nature of the changes our societies are undergoing, ie technological development. One of the most urgent resulting needs has been, and doubtless still is, to develop the population's technical and professional training in these new technologies. However, it is not only occupational life that is affected by these changes.

*7. - Family, domestic and social life is today pervaded just as much as occupational life by information and communication technologies and by information-processing machines. New social relationships are being established, and a new society is being organised around a new system of wealth creation and power sharing. Access to ideas, like access to the production and processing of information, are becoming decisive factors for social discrimination.

*8. - These changes indicate that it will no longer be possible to limit the role of education to familiarisation with the new technologies or to provide occupational qualifications. It is rather a question of promoting the dynamism of individuals and social groups as well as combating a new form of illiteracy in which traditional illiteracy and technological illiteracy are combined in a new way. Seen from this perspective, the task of adult education can be regarded as the construction of a new citizenship.

*9. - Social, occupational and personal identity can no longer be seen as having been definitively acquired at the end of adolescence or on completion of compulsory schooling. On the contrary, it must be continually regenerated: education is a means of fostering and reinforcing this constant process of socialisation.

*10. - Adult education remains one of the pre-eminent means by which societies and citizens can stimulate, direct and control structural change in the systems of economic, political and social regulation. It relates first and foremost to the increasing autonomy of adults, their qualifications and their ability to conduct change. The current tendency of societies is to make individuals vulnerable by rigidifying the interdependencies between income, qualifications and employment. The logic of education is, of course, outside this process. It can nonetheless help individuals and groups to loosen the process of rigidification somewhat. Accordingly, it is important to prevent at all costs this socialising education from becoming a "reserved system" solely intended for certain social categories, as this would only result in their increased marginalisation.

*11. - Socialising education covers the full range of the customary principles of education, namely: the acquisition of culture, transversal skills, know-how transferable to situations other than those in which they were acquired, individual autonomy etc. In short, it is a philosophy of education that is based on the development of individual capacity for the benefit of that of the community. The dynamics of socialising education lie in the "magic triangle" of development: development of the personality, based on a right to qualifications; social and economic development; development of citizenship.

*12. - The campaign that has been waged against unemployment in recent years has failed to attain its objectives. As for policies for old age, they are largely confined to a social work dimension which the recent recognition of the gravity and extent of the phenomenon of ageing is doing much to call in question.

*13. - The long-term unemployed and the elderly bear witness not only to the process of marginalisation and social exclusion but also to the fallaciousness of received ideas which serve to legitimise an all too widespread pessimism discouraging any kind of initiative. Naturally, it cannot be claimed that all older or unemployed people are marginalised or excluded. However, the gravity of the problems raised by the scale of social change demands that we address ourselves to the task of formulating responses to the most difficult situations, which are also those that have so far remained unsolved.

*14. - Advocating adult education for the older people, the long-term unemployed and all social outcasts means denouncing social stereotypes and negative images, which are sometimes shared even by those who are the subjects of them. This is an essential element of individual motivation, without which no amount of education will succeed in restoring to citizens the ability to develop and fully exercise their talents, as well as their rights and obligations, in contemporary society.

*15. - Contrary to popular wisdom, both the unemployed and older people demonstrate, in dealing with the permanent stress of their lives, an ability to cope with and adapt to change. In the ongoing process of living, there is no cut-off point past which the individual is no longer capable of evolving or developing his or her potential. It is possible to learn and adapt to all social situations, even to old age. The determining factor is neither age nor status, but practice. Illiteracy is another example demonstrating that, without practice, whatever has been learned can also be unlearned. Consequently, the maintenance of intellectual functions depends on their being constantly stimulated and put to use.

*16. - If, in relation to these far-reaching new demands, adult education is proving to be one of the most pertinent responses, it must be emphasised that adult education is still developing. Our topic groups based their work on a highly pragmatic approach, examining actual experiments conducted in a wide variety of countries and contexts; none of these experiments was perfect. That is why we are offering no innovative theoretical concepts for a new definition of education. The objective was to gain an insight into new educational arrangements put into practice spontaneously and with varying degrees of sophistication on the initiative of diverse social circles in response to local situations demanding a response, and on the basis of the imperfections and inadequacies of the existing arrangements.

*17. - Present-day adult education is assuming the new forms conferred on it by educators confronted with the most obvious and sometimes dire consequences of social change. It is therefore important to note that we are dealing only with tentative schemes. Even so, certain broad features can be identified. Essentially, this education is characterised by:

- its autonomy in relation to other forms of education or vocational training, with which it is nonetheless co-ordinated;
- its primary objective of continuously (re-)socialising individuals and groups;
- its proximity;
- the fullest possible devolution of its management and organisation as to the actual sources of needs which are the places where the target populations live;
- its strategic guidance by a co-ordinator concerting the efforts of the different contributors;
- the co-production of training by the system's "consumers" and educators alike;
- its holistic approach to the trainee;
- the transferability of the skills it imparts.

*18. - This education must be "global" or holistic because:

- it concerns the totality of the individual at whom it is aimed, or with his/her attainments, background, personality, interests, etc;

- it integrates and dovetails complementary dimensions of the learning process: reception, guidance, assessment, evaluation, recognition and validation of attainments, etc.

- it is a collective, multi-partner response to an environment, and mobilises a range of resources to that end;

- as a service (rather than an economic commodity), it is co-produced by its users, and

- it is directed towards the individual and the social group alike.

*19. - Another feature of adult education is its proximity. Bringing adult education closer to its customers implies modifying their relationship with the education system and thus creating their motivation, improving the physical and financial conditions of their access to education, organising the special circumstances of adult learning, stimulating cognitive activities and ability to learn "how to learn", developing teaching methods which take account of the individual's existing skills and personal rhythms and so on. All this can be summed up in the concept of proximity, ie proximity of needs, resources, facilities and competences which are themselves defined as competences of proximity.

*20. - As far as the organisation and content of education are concerned, these must be in tune with the day-to-day environment of adult learners and with their resocialisation prospects. Adult education and local development must proceed in tandem, in that community development of this kind (in the sense of CDCC project N° 9 - Adult Education and Community Development - 1982- 1986) can create a particular dynamic in terms of an organised collectivity.

*21. - It is essential to distinguish clearly between what relates to education and what relates to information. There is a great deal of the latter in the present-day world. The task of education is not therefore limited to providing information, but includes providing people with ways of better selecting and processing the information by which they are surrounded and indeed saturated.

*22. - In addition to its autonomy and flexibility, education of this kind must be open. This means, firstly, that it should enable individuals to become integrated into programmes of vocational training and social advancement; its goal is not to enclose people in any particular system that is itself marginalising. It must therefore be envisaged from the angle of complementarity. Equally, it must be non-selective and accessible to the greatest possible number. This in turn implies that it should enjoy adequate and appropriate resources. Such is far from the case at present; in the majority of countries, this sector is under-funded, being subsidised from various different, even contradictory budget headings.

*23. - Moreover, the nature of the purposes and social necessity of this education is such that adult education should be recognised as a right in the same way as schooling for children.

INTRODUCTION

Europe is changing socially, demographically, economically and politically.

Technological developments and the diversification of the ways in which work is organised have considerably changed both the nature and conditions of work as well as the structure of the employment market. The globalisation of markets and the internationalisation of production have accelerated the rate of economic change, with knowledge becoming a central factor. Demographic trends and the diversification of migratory flows are upsetting the major social balances and calling systems of social regulation into question. Nation-states are confronted with both the rise of regionalism and the emergence of supra-national entities, while part of Europe is embarking on a transition towards democratic pluralism and a competitive market economy. Computer-based information is permeating contemporary societies, thereby modifying social relations and their underlying values.

At the heart of these transformations, the socialisation of individuals, and thus the socialising functions of education, are affected. Everyone, as both producers and citizens, is confronted with this need for continuous resocialisation, even though the need varies in form according to the individual and the social group to which he or she belongs.

Alongside vocational training systems rendered inoperative by the nature of long-term unemployment or the ageing of the population, the need of adult education was recently confirmed in the search for a response to two other major social requirements:

- the adaptation of populations to changes in the context of work processes and to shifts of emphasis in regional planning;
- the dynamisation of populations - especially the most deprived sections to help them to generate their own development projects.

In this context, it appears that some people require something other than what traditional systems of education or vocational training have to offer. Vocational training was invented more or less simultaneously in all the industrialised countries as a means of alleviating the shortcomings of basic education and as a support for industrialisation. Since then, faced with the problem of long-term unemployment which it is unable to resolve, with local development projects or redeployment schemes, vocational training has often looked to this concept of adult education to attenuate its own shortcomings.

This new form of education exists on a much wider scale than the few experiments we were able to observe. However, there are two major aspects to our own approach. On the one hand, it enables a clearer relationship to be established between the nature of social change and this form of education to ensure that it responds to the new demands arising from these changes. On the other hand, it tries to bring out the ingredients of this education that are relevant to these new functions in order to argue the case for the transformation of this education, ie for the upgrading of its present status as a marginalised, under-staffed adjunct with little financial and legislative backing to that of an autonomous system.

PART I

THE NEED FOR AN AUTONOMOUS SYSTEM OF ADULT EDUCATION

POLICY GUIDELIINES

1. Approaches to adult education: specificities and convergences.

Since our work was set within the Council of Europe framework, we could not separate our inquiry into social change and its effects from an inquiry into forms of pluralist democracy. Neither the producer nor the consumer can be isolated from the citizen. This is a fundamental human rights message conveyed by the Council of Europe.

We are witnessing the transformation of the societies in which we live and, hence, the transformation of the conditions of our participation in those societies. This is not, as may appear at first glance, a minor transformation of a techonological nature for the Western European countries and of a politico-economic kind for the Central and Eastern European countries.

It is advisable, in this connection, to treat with caution an interpretation which persists in separating political rights from economic and social rights in order to grade them more clearly, an interpretation which implies that Central and Eastern Europe is being converted to the former set of these rights and the West to the latter. Firstly, such an interpretation is not in accordance with the facts (illiteracy, poverty, unemployment, etc). Secondly, it suggests a sort of superfluous luxury - a view incompatible with the concept of the indivisibility of human rights.

The transformation which our societies are now undergoing affects their very foundations. Its nature is identical in every country, even though it manifests itself in different ways. This change is also decisive as in the case of the revolution which ushered in the industrial society. It involves every aspect of life - manpower, employment, generation of income, flows of goods and persons, nature of capital, relations between States, the role of infra- or supra-regional bodies, etc. It is not surprising, therefore, that it is all-pervading and affects the political and economic spheres as much as the social and cultural.

There is no doubt that the workings of pluralist democracy are also affected, since it is the place of the citizen and the day-to-day exercise of his/her citizenship that are involved. A response to this must be found. Socialisation as a process of learning to exercise citizenship must be constantly renewed in an environment that is itself in a state of flux. Among the institutions which can contribute to this, schools have a special role to play, for it is there that socialisation is objectivised. However, not all schools or types of education are suitable for the purpose.

It is worth noting that States and the international organisations to which they belong are all taking an interest, in various ways, in the question of "basic skills" and "social skills".

Employers are interested in what one might term "peripherical skills" alongside vocational qualifications. Seeking a workforce that is flexible, adaptable, and capable of working as a team, transferring attainments from one work situation to another, taking initiatives and shouldering responsibilities, employers have persuaded trainees to subordinate vocational training to the acquisition of basic skills.

States, faced with such problems as the social reintegration of young people in difficulty, the eradication of illiteracy, the re-employment of the unemployed - particularly the long-term unemployed - and the massive redeployment of working people, are having to expand the technological dimension of vocational training.

OECD now speaks of "complementary education", and in the same spirit the Commission of the European Communities advances the idea of "basic qualification".

Our own approach is thus convergent, being based on the complementarity of vocationalisation and the ongoing socialisation of adults in the context of a deliberate, organised form of socialisation.

2. The demand for education, an indicator of the varied processes of social change

The educational schemes we observed reveal an extremely complex demand on the part of those availing themselves of them. Indeed, the term "demand" can probably be used only fairly loosely, since it is clear that what adults are seeking from education is complex, a reflection of their difficulty in finding their bearings and clearly deciding how such a strategy might help them.

The most varied aspirations could be cited higgledy-piggledy: to improve one's reading and writing ability; to get out of one's home to prove one's social usefulness after too early a retirement; to find, together with one's peers, ways of improving daily life (cf the study circles in The Netherlands) or even of entering economic life (cf the production cooperatives in Ireland and Portugal); to resume one's education in the case of people who left the school system prematurely.

All the educators we met believe that the type of schemes they are conducting cannot be limited to meeting vocational needs, even though these needs were never completely absent. They often see themselves as being half-way between social workers and placement specialists; and in most cases it is considered necessary for educational arrangements and teams to cover both these aspects. Thus, the "educational pair" system adopted in Germany involves a training instructor and a psychologist with the aim of providing the most effective response to the financial, housing, health and even alcohol and drug problems encountered by young adults.

However, this spontaneous mobilisation of trainers raises a question, for what is the significance of the "half-way house" between social work, basic education and vocational training?

3. The nature of the new social requirements

The first observation to be made in this context relates to the interpenetration of the educational, social and occupational spheres in the case of groups which are undeniably disadvantaged in managing them in their everyday lives. Such adults do, of course, have to deal with these areas as a whole on a daily basis. However, it is noteworthy that the social processes in question do not operate interactively but tend to be organised separately. Moreover, education systems have often sanctioned this separation.

The conclusion from this first observation is that one contributory factor to the problems faced by such groups, and thus to their general exclusion, is the interpenetration and lack of differentiation between the occupational, social, and educational fields. In other words, it is because these adults are unable to link together these different fields in their everyday lives that their difficulties arise. Thus, the search for employment in a restricted job market and in particularly depressed areas is often more likely to succeed if the applicant can produce some recommendation in his or her favour. This is the experience resulting from the Helmond project in The Netherlands, as well as from the example given to us by a representative of the Rhône-Alpes regional employment directorate during our study visit to France.

As the potential job market varies according to the trade or skill concerned, the more traditional these are, the more limited the market. Job-seekers' preferences relate more to general working conditions than to the nature of the work itself. In these circumstances, the type of information available on possible placements depends above all on the information network at the individual's disposal. The availability of such a network is critical, and this applies equally, albeit in different fields, to older people. This is why education systems are creating a variety of substitutes for networks which have failed.

4. Cultural distance and inter-personal relational capacity of individuals

Two other observations need to be made. The first concerns individuals' relationships, or rather their capacity to establish relationships. Both the concept of distance and that of relations with institutions (especially administrations) are relevant to the perception of remoteness. Obviously this may involve geographical distance, as in the case of the inhabitants of the rural Baixo de Mondego area in Portugal. It can apply equally to social distance, as in the case of women living in deprived areas of Limerick, in Ireland, who have few opportunities to get to the city centre. Distance is also a factor for the elderly who, like those living in London suburbs, depend on inconvenient public transport systems.

Difficulty in making use of public services and social institutions can also be seen in terms of distance - this time cultural - arising from an inability to understand complex procedures based on obscure rules.

With regard to the second observation, it can be said that what all these groups have in common is perhaps their general inability to make effective use of social networks: as the Helmond project in the Netherlands shows, an adult's unemployability is a completely relative concept, in no way attributable to some particular intangible feature of his or her character. On the contrary: by working closely and directly with potential employers and bringing the unemployed into contact with them, the organisers of this project are highlighting the logic governing recruitment procedures. Misleadingly obvious criteria, such as level of qualifications or

employment experience, are in fact used as a way of identifying other skills. To minimise the risks associated with the cost of training and possible absenteeism and to assess the individual's likely contribution to productivity, potential employers attempt to ascertain his/her reliability, his/her ability to fit into a work team, and the speed with which he/she would be able to grasp new - sometimes unwritten -operating rules.

Not only does this example clearly demonstrate the difficulty of separating areas which are distinct in theory, as already shown; it also highlights the need for a fresh approach to working with these adults, as well as the nature of a major social change in the way qualifications are viewed.

5. Reshaping of basic social skills

The third observation relates to difficulties in defining the basic knowledge which educators believe individuals lack. It is not just a question of proficiency in reading, writing, arithmetic, languages, etc. on which there is a complete consensus. Educators and policy-makers are unanimous that the "standard" of the population must rise significantly. However, definitions on precisely what this standard should be have been more hesitant and, to say the least, varied. The concept of culture is often called upon in support of an ambiguous and uneasy formulation. It is significant that one hears more and more of entrepreneurial "culture", "cultural" training courses, "enterprise culture" for first-time job-seekers, "cultural demand" of the elderly etc.

This culture, if indeed we can use the term in its broader sense, is certainly not that associated with the traditional content of school subjects. Nor is it synonymous with scholarly culture, even though this may be so in the case of the elderly, in so far as it must remain general and practical. The example of the Helmond project, outlined above, suggests rather a set of characteristics which, for want of a better term, we will categorise as "basic social skills".

These are the skills which adults need in order to meet the requirements of the different social forces and which they see as offering signs, in these adults, of responsibility, flexibility, adaptability, initiative, etc. While education always seems to have set out to provide these skills, they are now becoming increasingly important in the light of new demands from employers and society.

Highlighting the effects of the spread of new technologies and new materials on the world of work has become a common practice. Not only do new machines carry out the work formerly done by operatives, they also place workers in a new psychological and physical environment. Thus, in addition to mechanical failure, automation may entail operational anomalies which call for quite different skills. To work the equipment, the operator must be capable of assessing, anticipating variations and interpreting data. Moreover, these tasks are themselves carried out by means of controls and signals. Action is thus now mentally regulated. And even if they are not technologically determined, patterns of work organisation are also evolving; as a result, while the assembly line may not yet have been finally laid to rest, what some writers have called "intelligence sharing" has come to the fore in firms.

These changes in the world of work are not without repercussions in the world at large. The need to produce as cheaply as possible, reduce manufacturing time, cut down stocks and so on is influencing expectations about consumer behaviour. In recent decades, consumers and users have been increasingly integrated into this logical process. Who can have failed to notice the numerous efforts to rationalise and improve the profitability of public transport, administration etc.? When elderly people who are unable to "dialogue" fast enough with their bank cash dispenser see their cashcard swallowed up by the machine, is this not an effect of these changes?

6. The information and communication society

The need for new adult education arrangements is evidence of the emergence of a new society. Whether this be called "post-industrial society" (Daniel BELL), "tertiarised societies", "computerised societies" (Francis BALLE)..., it is quite clear that the role of information and communication has increased and is now affecting our ways of life.

This has, of course, altered the content of jobs and increased the number of jobs in the information sector. It is therefore essential that adult education and vocational training take account of these facts, as indeed they already have. More generally, however, the result has been a reshaping of daily life. This is the yardstick against which should be gauged the observation that the acquisition and diffusion of knowledge is the basic strategic resource of modern society.

The ability of the various countries to compete on a global scale is now determined by their capacity to create and transmit information. In the case of businesses associated with the "computer revolution", it is noteworthy that their success is nowadays less dependent on capital than on human resources. Similarly, the main challenge facing our societies is the production of information and the acquisition and diffusion of knowledge.

Social change now lies in the growth and speed of transactions between individuals through the proliferation of telephones, fax facilities and computerised telecommunications, the integration of mass and personalised communication techniques and the constantly expanding trade in texts, images and sounds. Today the term "intelligent societies" reflects, not a noble moral ideal, but a reality based on economics. As Francis BALLE puts it, "while communication technology goes on reducing the time taken to transmit information... for the first time in history, our economy is founded on an infinitely renewable resource, through human willpower and self-creation".

What is remarkable is the speed of these changes, which are revolutionising our cultural environment, habits and ways of thinking.

7. Loss of proximity and deterioration of social fabrics

We can thus see the need for continuous socialisation. If we are to avoid a two-tier society, which is quite untenable from an economic and social point of view, the majority of today's working men and women cannot be excluded from these developments. An enormous effort is therefore required from all sides. However, while the goals and objectives of such an undertaking are fairly clear, the question of "how" remains unanswered.

A number of individuals will make the necessary adjustments without any major difficulties: that is, the skills they already have, and the interplay of the various socialisation factors - family, workplace, media, social networks (including vocational training) - will prove adequate for the purpose of resocialising these people along the required lines. This will not, however, be the case with all - indeed, probably with the majority. Adult education is thus becoming a social issue. The truth of this assertion is easy to grasp if one stops to consider the inequality of access to school education and vocational training.

Even so, it does not seem possible to consider access to adult education as a mere question of social justice or reduction of inequalities and hence a process of redistribution. That would be an over-simplification of the scope of the current social changes. The depth of these upheavals cannot be measured in terms of a further stage in the transformations which industrial society has been undergoing for three centuries. On the contrary, we are witnessing the birth of a new type of society permeating all aspects of life - the creation of wealth, the establishment of production systems and, indeed, the development of attitudes.

Thierry GAUDIN has very aptly illustrated the points of impact of these innovations: "New languages are being born: the 'languages of images', which can revolutionise our ways of perceiving knowledge. We are still far from identifying all their possible applications. They include the consultation of data banks, computer-aided design and teaching, the control of industrial processes, office automation, programming, automatic control of equipment and so on. Materials, living creatures, sounds and images are now being manufactured industrially which are no longer facsimiles of nature, having been artificially and deliberately created (...). An 'empire of signs' is spreading throughout the planet. (...) How can we understand anything, how can we find our bearings in this whirlwind of expanding signs?" (1).

This is indeed the problem - no longer one of deprivation, but one of superabundance - in which a discerning person is at an advantage. Today, no matter what the circumstances, information will only offer genuine power to those who succeed in gaining access to it and interpreting it so as to be able to exploit it for the purpose of managing situations differently by a method analogous to what mathematicians call an "elegant solution". Here we are dealing with a cultural problem in the most fundamental sense of the term. These inevitable changes, which will affect the whole shape of society, are too pervasive to be left to chance: it is for us to determine what directions they will take and to ensure that they are compatible with democracy and human rights.

Another aspect of the exclusion process, as revealed by observation of the new type of educational arrangement, is, as already stressed, the concept of distance. This too derives from the establishment of an integrated information and communication society. The concept of proximity is now acquiring a new meaning. As techniques become more integrated, individuals are having more opportunities to become "delocalised" and select their relationships not just from their immediate circle but from a new context where spatial proximity has been more or less replaced by "informational proximity". The combining of the specialist media with the mass media is thus calling into question existing forms of social affiliation. The establishment of a multiplicity of networks offers people a free choice of allegiances, references and affiliations.

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(1) "Les métamorphoses du futur" - Futuribles - February/March 1989

However, this freedom from the need to rub shoulders with one's neighbours poses a certain threat to social cohesion. This is shown by the difficulty of maintaining mutual aid policies at a time when television can successfully organise programmes for this or that major cause. The link between community and communication as expressions of a desire to live together is now looser.

Membership of a range of social groups is now reserved for the privileged, while those in less favourable circumstances continue to belong to the poorest and least effective networks. These groups include the long-term unemployed, who are unable to secure any help in finding employment, even of a temporary nature, and older people, who are doomed to loneliness.

The insistence with which many political figures, in widely differing social, economic and political contexts, have drawn attention to these facts offers ample proof, if proof were needed, of the extent to which this dualisation of societies poses a major threat to social cohesion. It is all the more dangerous for being extremely subtle as well as totally abstract and therefore difficult for those concerned to grasp.

8. The need for autonomy as a response to the reconstitution of social fabrics

On the basis of these observations, it is possible to draw a general portrait of those in difficulty. This should contribute to the organisation of educational activities, while being more relevant than the categories and divisions generally used by social policy-makers.

There are three main features:

- firstly, a certain isolation in the sense of non-membership of voluntary networks;
- secondly, a relationship with social and occupational processes where, once more, abstraction is absent and materiality dominant; materiality in tasks of the most standardised and repetitive kind; materiality of social relations in the most precarious jobs; materiality in pecuniary exchanges etc.;
- finally, a difficulty, if not inability, to move about in the "empire of signs", to carry out the decoding and discernment essential to the effective use of information.

These three features appear to apply to all those deemed to be in difficulty, to which handicaps of a more specific kind must be added, depending on the individual or the particular group (85% unemployment in Southill, near Limerick, in Ireland).

Unless dualisation is opted for, the prompt introduction of wide-ranging measures is essential, not only to make up for lost time but also to compensate for the disintegration of thought and personality structures, including those of social groups, since in such circumstances handicaps become cumulative.

In the late 1950s, education was given the task of keeping up with changes in career opportunities. In most of the countries of Europe, the response was a proliferation of various forms of vocational training. This response is no longer adequate. Education now requires another type of mandate, one which is more ambitious in its coverage of people and fields, as well as of greater depth.

The key dimension of these new developments is helping us to rediscover that men and women are not only producers of goods and services; they are also - and perhaps above all - responsible for creating their general social environment. This is the global context with which adult education must concern itself. Moreover, this is one of the first lessons to emerge from the educational schemes we examined. While taking into account the specific circumstances of the groups concerned, it is not really possible for educators to isolate particular aspects of an individual's personality or his/her method of social integration.

As Johan ENGELHARDT has noted, "the long-term unemployed, as a social group, have created their own cultural model, characterised by a lack of confidence leading to a sense of hopelessness. As individuals, they are often defeatists, with no belief in their ability to change their own situation. What help they have been offered has often left their situation unchanged. They live on a minimum of social welfare payments or unemployment benefits, at the very threshold of poverty. Traditional types of training geared towards the job market do not meet the educational needs of the long-term unemployed as a new social group. Experience shows that the first priority in these activities is to create a learning environment that promotes self-confidence and gives opportunities for developing a social network in which individuals can support each other". (2)

Thus the adult undergoing training should be seen from two points of view: as an individual, with his specific experience, his/her own conception of reality, his/her plans for the future, and so on; and as the co-creator of his/her social environment.

In the particularly depressed urban and rural areas we visited, employment is not a given fact to which individuals simply need to be adapted. It is a question not merely of adaptation but of establishing appropriate conditions for the individual to deploy his or her abilities. In such areas, employment has to be created, and this task must be approached in the same way as training in the setting up of a business: the acquisition of knowledge per se is totally inadequate and ineffective unless accompanied by the establishment of the necessary work environment. It is hardly surprising, then, that many of the schemes in countries such as Ireland, The Netherlands, Spain and Portugal are connected with production or marketing co-operatives. The aim is to enable adults to achieve autonomy through education.

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(2) "The education of long-term unemployed adults. Relationship between learning and work" Council of Europe (DECS/EES (88) 7)

9. The concept of socialisation

We use the term "socialisation" to mean the function of learning and assimilating the rules of social exchange.

The term thus encompasses the acquisition of knowledge concerning the social mechanisms of the society in which one lives as well as the acquisition of stable and, at least to a point, adaptable patterns of behaviour. The concept of socialisation is thus relative to that of social integration, but it seeks to avoid, through its neutrality, the negative connotation of constraint often associated with the latter. It is therefore a question of an all-encompassing competence linked with individuals' citizenship, in connection both with their role as producers of goods and services and with their everyday environment.

It is probable that the concept of education has long sufficed to denote the acquisition of such competence. In defining this role of schools, we will draw on Dr Albert BASTENIER's description: "The school is one of the main socialising influences for all generations of young people in a given society. It provides what is known as 'secondary socialisation', following on from the 'primary' stage, which is normally the family's responsibility. Through the school, the child first experiences the non-subjective standards of community life. Whereas the family circle was a community of affection, moods and subjective relationships, the school is a community for studying, acquiring objective knowledge, and mastering rules and contractual undertakings. By the teaching they dispense, schools have to equip individuals to enter the cut-and-thrust of adult life with competence and confidence... But in order to operate effectively as an individual and as a citizen (i.e. participant) in a given community, one must have sufficient knowledge of the social mechanisms governing that community, and be familiar with its rules, movements, constraints and obstacles, and the multiple formalities of social intercourse, both as they are in fact and as they seem upon first impact." (3).

Defined in this way, education may take on different practical forms.

However - and this is our main argument - there is today a dichotomy between education and socialisation owing to the scale of the social change with which individuals have to cope. Skills acquired in the course of compulsory schooling, during childhood and adolescence, will not suffice to guarantee the requisite flexibility and adaptability throughout adult life.

Socialisation has thus become a permanent requirement for everyone. All adults need to be resocialised. Education is only one of the means of socialisation, alongside the family, the media, urban life, industry, voluntary associations, and so on. Yet only education can, thanks to its objectivising function, foster socialisation, particularly in the case of people in the greatest difficulty.

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(3) "Education for citizenship in a context of diversity.
Multidisciplinary conference on the educational and cultural aspects of community relations" Council of Europe (CC-MG- Conf (89) 5)

10. Permanent socialisation?

The Council of Europe's role is to promote human rights and democratic pluralism.

In general, no one can disagree with this objective. However, it is one thing to define these rights, to seek their incorporation into legislation and to promote the rule of law; it is quite another to allow men and women to exercise these rights effectively. In other words, it is not enough simply to define citizenship; steps must also be taken to give people practical means of exercising it.

Education makes an important contribution to this task, since it offers individuals the means of understanding situations - the ability to analyse, synthesise, judge and criticise - so that they can find their bearings and formulate strategies for action.

The first aspect to note, in the light of the observations made by the topic groups, is the unsuitability of current forms of education. In the majority of countries, education systems operate according to a fairly rigid division of labour. On the one hand, basic education, which is organisationally and geographically fairly coherent and comprehensive, is designed to accompany the growth and development of children and adolescents. On the other, a varied set of arrangements has been introduced, particularly since the end of the last century, to respond to the particular - and sometimes quite specific - needs of certain sections of the population.

In recent decades, this has particularly involved the promotion of occupational mobility, the retraining or further training of certain categories of workers, the reintegration of women into the employment market, the familiarisation of migrants with their new socio-economic environments and the integration of young people into the world of work.

This distinction highlights the fact that arrangements of the second type are limited in scope, which is greatly determined by their target groups, and their only function is to make up for or rectify the aberrations or shortcomings of basic education.

Is such a situation really satisfactory in the light of the social circumstances observed? In other words, can an individual's education be said to be complete when his or her period of compulsory education ends?

Nothing could be less certain! Today, life is in a constant state of flux. Individuals are continually required to adjust their thought processes, reference frames and behaviour patterns. It is not possible to learn roles and acquire appropriate attitudes on a "once-and-for-all" basis.

11. The strategic dimension of cognitive processes

What emerges is that the "communication society" and the new educational schemes constitute an invitation to rediscover the importance of thought and its processes.

As Francis BALLE rightly pointed out, the basic issue is one of choices. "With whom to communicate when one can communicate with everyone? What to look at when one can see everything? What to record and preserve when everything can be recorded? Telecommunications, which are simpler and more diverse than ever before, have created the dream of knowledge for all and communication with everyone. Yet how much useless knowledge there is! How many missed opportunities for contact!"

In social and occupational contexts where the management of uncertainty is crucial, observation, analysis and judgement are key aspects of the exercise of citizenship, which cannot be reduced to merely using one's right to vote.

12. Bringing education closer to adults

In establishing a set of arrangements better able to meet the needs thus defined, educators have been able to make extensive use of extremely rich material.

One example is the general concept of "permanent education". The history of this concept and of its varied fortunes since the 1960s, particularly under the impetus of the Council of Europe, is well known and might even be said to form part of educators' mental universe. This is probably the explanation for its continuing topicality, even though the profound social, economic and cultural crisis which has affected the world for two decades - and whose consequences have still not been overcome - has called in question the noble intentions associated with a "model integrating all aspects of education and capable of responding to the growing and increasingly varied needs of each individual, young or old, in the new European society".

During the 1970s and 1980s, the enforced realism which obliged educators to develop more relevant arrangements led them to combine the principles of permanent education in a new context, that of the problem of flexibility.

At the current stage of this process, a new form of education is emerging, with five main characteristics. It is:

- **Autonomous:** rather than claiming to be all-embracing, this new system is seeking ways of linking up with the other major systems, viz basic education and vocational training. Its aim is therefore to become incorporated as an autonomous and specific system within an "educational continuum" where each adult can discover the passage-ways best suited to his or her situation.

- **Purpose-built:** as we have attempted to demonstrate, the aim is to create basic social skills in the context of the permanent socialisation of adults. However, the nature of this specificity still needs to be developed beyond the observations made by the topic groups.

- **Learner-centred and complementary to a holistic view of the individual:** although the former of these principles is not unique to this particular form of education, its particular relevance to adults should be stressed. By definition, the adult has already acquired a fund of experience and knowledge which can form a basis for an effective and motivating educational scheme. Research into the individualisation of training courses will be of considerable value here.

- **Close to the potential learners:** the design, implementation, management and administration of projects should be carried out as closely as possible to the adults concerned.

- **Dependent on a variety of partners:** educators can no longer have a monopoly on educational activities, since they have no claim to being the sole agents of socialisation. The organisation of such activities must thus be open to collaboration with outside bodies on a more or less ad hoc basis.

13. Who should be responsible for such education?

Let us begin by stating that the object and purpose of such education, namely fostering the permanent resocialisation of adults, are so broad that this resocialisation cannot be left to chance without there being a risk of further inequalities arising. The danger of the social fabric losing its cohesion, which we have already mentioned several times, is, when taken in conjunction with the philosophy of human rights and the principles of democratic pluralism, an argument for strong intervention in this sector. To quote Father J. WRESINSKI: "State abstention from intervention in no way guarantees that citizens will in fact be free to associate, travel and participate, particularly insofar as their existence remains affected by some economic, social or cultural uncertainty".

The intervention advocated would serve to ensure, in the interest of citizens' equality of rights, that this socialisation and the education that should accompany it are not left exclusively to the initiative of individuals.

If we consider the various partners involved, we can see that, in one way or another, all public institutions, firms and individuals are concerned. Firms must play their part, as this education is a condition of the feasibility and efficiency of all vocational training. Moreover, we have seen how firms have already taken an interest in education for permanent resocialisation; some of them have not hesitated to develop - albeit on still too limited a scale - their own programmes to this end.

As for public bodies, since it is they that represent the public good, it is they that should take the lead in promoting good practice and in correcting mechanisms which produce inequality.

Over the past few decades, however, there has been increasing activity by a range of public bodies, varying in level and scope from municipalities to supra-national entities. It is vital that, with an eye to drawing places of work and living closer together, there should be strong involvement at local level.

But the ultimate responsibility should lie with the largest public authority which is still the State, even though supra-national bodies will play a significant role in the promotion and support of this type of education.

14. An energetic policy.

At a time when, in many countries, a great desire for more economic, social and political democracy is being expressed so spectacularly, long-term unemployment and the marginalisation of certain groups of ageing persons have emerged as symptoms of the inadequacy of the compromises reached over many decades. The resulting forms of social regulation have proved unable to maintain social cohesion as effectively as in the past. Behind these phenomena of marginalisation, there lie the more serious and global problems of exclusion and poverty, a diminished community spirit and thus a breakdown in social relations and the existence of threats to democracy.

Apart from these specific situations, the challenge faced by all societies is to ensure that everyone has access to social interaction and to the world of work. Education, thus linked to the transformation of employment and social welfare systems, becomes an essential aspect of the creation of new forms of social regulation.

These new issues facing our societies call for new responses notably in the field of adult education.

An examination of local experiments initiated by educators and their partners reveals that we are moving into a second phase of permanent education. This is no longer characterised by the generous impulses generated by a period of economic growth, but by the need to establish a system of autonomous adult education which, while not claiming to be the sole key to the problems of employment and social change, can help to solve them.

The role played by education policy-makers in the different countries will be a determining factor in constructing this education as a coherent system. This is a major challenge, and means and conditions for meeting it have barely been sketched out. Only an energetic policy analogous to what is sometimes done in the industrial or regional planning sphere can succeed in structuring a sector equal in importance to the latter. But the time is not yet ripe for education by decree.

Social circles must be given time to develop these new educational responses, since they cannot be imposed from above. Nor can they be uniform, any more than the development models they must accompany. The model of pluralist societies did not arise from moral considerations. It is a necessity, just as the integrative model was in different circumstances. It is necessary to the functioning and regulation of contemporary economies and societies in which component ethnic and social groups must of necessity coexist and enrich one another.

Only by using life-size laboratories will it be possible to identify positive areas for future action: hence the value of cross-fertilisation through the networking of the various experiments under way, which foreshadow possible future directions for the process of European construction and for democracies.

Tomorrow is already partially inscribed in this or that aspect of our education systems and our cultures. Europe's enormous diversity makes it a huge reservoir of alternative approaches. Hence the overriding need to develop exchanges, mutual evaluations and networks of experiments.

PART II

INNOVATORY INITIATIVES IN ADULT EDUCATION

GUIDE TO GOOD PRACTICE

In Part I, we stated the case for an autonomous system of adult education. Here, in Part II, we shall be outlining, in the light of the topic groups' field observations, some of the forms which such education might take and hence the "good practices" on which its sponsors might draw.

1. TARGET POPULATIONS

Who are the target populations?

In the course of their investigations, the topic groups realised the need to broaden their definition of the target populations so as to include all unskilled groups incapable of active participation in the developed European economies.

The scope of the survey was thus extended to the underemployed in rural areas and in the transitional economies of Central and Eastern Europe, the unemployed in areas of de-industrialisation or heavy tertiarisation and those currently employed but, being ill-educated, unskilled and poorly paid, are the ones most vulnerable to fluctuations in the economy.

The prevailing tendency in society is to make individuals vulnerable by rigidifying the relationship between income, qualifications and employment. The logic of education is, of course, outside this process. It can nonetheless help individuals and groups to loosen the process of rigidification somewhat. Accordingly, it is imperative to prevent this socialising education from becoming a "reserved system" intended exclusively for certain social categories, as this would only result in their increased marginalisation.

Socialising education covers all the usual requirements of education in general: the acquisition of culture, transverse skills, skills transferable to situations other than those in which they were acquired, individual autonomy etc. In short, it is a philosophy of education based on the development of individual ability for the benefit of the community.

The dynamic of socialising education is to be found on the "magic triangle" of development: development of the personality, based on a right to qualifications; social and economic development; and development of citizenship.

Unsuitability of targeting by priority groups

A distinction must be made here between two levels: organisation and group formation.

As regards organisation, the concept of targeting entails several dangers. First, because any targeting entails a cut-off point, beyond which there is an even more disadvantaged group. Secondly, because the difficulties to be overcome are identical in essence, often amounting to an accumulation of handicaps. And finally, because it is important to reach people in their entirety, both as individuals (background and personality) and in their relationship with their environment.

As for group formation, a certain degree of targeting is necessary here. The populations we studied were by no means homogeneous. Where there are no precise, objective criteria for identifying a population, training is invariably aimed, through a series of skimming-off processes, at the individuals in the least difficulty. Targeting should, however, be understood as a pedagogical concern for homogeneity in the given group, where individual motivation is the main factor.

2. EDUCATION MADE TO MEASURE

The factors determining how the new adult educational arrangements are organised are no longer internal ones, but rather external ones. Today, instead of transmitting, adult education should respond, and therefore listen and understand. The result is a thorough transformation of the education production system, as well as of the functions involved, in order to enable it to understand the needs of its environment and effectively respond to them.

Fostering strategies of change

The Yugoslav authorities held a conference in Belgrade which was attended by representatives from the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. It provided an opportunity for closer analysis of the consequences and demands of a situation of sweeping social change, since these are more apparent there than in certain Western European situations. The psychological dimension of the different ways in which changes are perceived by the various social categories was emphasised, as were the various attitudes to which this gives rise.

The need to deal with these problems is one of the reasons why the objectives, strategies and contents of education should change. More importance must thus be attached to cultivating awareness of, and receptiveness to, new realities; developing ability to assess changes critically and to adjust to them; encouraging original behaviour both in the individual and in the group; and developing motivation, a will to overcome difficulties, and the self-confidence required for that purpose.

Encouraging an outward-looking approach

Marginalisation is often associated with withdrawal into oneself and even the development of a whole culture of withdrawal. Yet whatever their age and social situation, people have the same needs: the need to be useful, the need to relate to others, the need to belong to something, the need to influence the environment, the need to create. These needs can only be met through consciously accepted interaction with others.

It is therefore important to provide varied opportunities for:

- sound interpersonal relations within the learning group;
- improved relations with the social environment: family, friends, relations, etc;
- making older people aware of the continuity between generations, and of their role in the transmission of values, skills, etc.;
- opening learners' eyes to the existence of similar forms of education for similar groups in other countries.

Rooting training courses in their environment

While certain arrangements have proved increasingly unsuitable for the lasting reintegration of marginalised people into society and employment, educators have often sought to strengthen their ties with their environment and particularly with the world of production. In Deventer and in Hof, trainees sell their building restoration services on protected markets; in Spain, they are firmly established in the market for broad beans... Another essential feature of adult education is verbal expression, as an essential factor for communication as well as for the structuring of knowledge; examples are found in Limerick, with its literacy campaign, and in the multilingualism in Malta and northern Scandinavia.

Broadening the objectives so as to include socialisation

Unlike conventional training courses, which are mainly focussed on occupational skills and, albeit less often, on social advancement, this education for adults is intended for people whose freedom of thought, association, movement and participation is liable to remain purely theoretical. Accordingly, such education is part of an ongoing process, not an isolated episode in the lives of those concerned. It is also related to their socialisation, which - and this is perhaps one of the major characteristics of contemporary societies - does not occur spontaneously and definitively through the traditional institutions, but requires continuous support.

This resocialisation function is a permanent necessity which might be misunderstood if the current changes in Central and Eastern Europe were over-emphasised. It is not a question of first of all deconstructing, then permanently reconstructing. In the East and in the West, in the North and in the South, the changes are economic as much as social, and permanent because they are profound. They demand creativity on the part of the individual and the group, and education has always been one of the main social means of fostering such creativity.

Transcending the individual / collective polarisation of objectives

Two "models" might be contrasted. In Hof, in Germany, the declared objectives are very clearly individual: acquisition of knowledge and skills, stabilisation of personality, personalised social assistance. The Spanish Youth and Solidarity Scheme seeks to act both on the causes and on the consequences of the state of deterioration in young people, as well as devise sound alternative solutions likely to provide new stimuli for the young.

In fact, we are faced not so much with a dualisation of objectives as with two extreme situations on a palette of various shades around several objectives.

Combating illiteracy

Most countries are confronted with the problems of illiteracy in one degree or another; This applies especially to adult educators working with long-term unemployed persons. In Malta, combating illiteracy is a central political concern for two reasons: the Maltese language is part of the national identity, while English is the medium of international communication.

Training in new technologies

Most people, and not only those in employment, should have a basic knowledge of the new technologies. The usefulness of efforts to combat what the Maltese authorities like to call "technological illiteracy" can be illustrated by the objectives assigned by the Ministry of Culture and Sports of Baden-Württemberg to one of the three "New Technology" programmes designed for older people:

- to allay fears and increase self-confidence in the use of new technologies;
- to provide more information about these technologies;
- to form a clearer picture of technological changes in everyday life;
- to encourage older people to be more active and autonomous;
- to master the technology used in everyday life.

Encouraging the acquisition of basic social skills

The aims pursued here may be enumerated as follows:

- motivating adults;
- bolstering their self-confidence, their self-esteem and their confidence in their ability to learn;
- developing their ability to communicate, decide, solve problems, organise themselves, work in a team, and so on;
- learning how to learn;
- encouraging the use of these skills outside the educational context;
- increasing the adaptability and autonomy of those concerned.

Creating motivation

Motivation is at the root of education, as well as being its ultimate aim. No education is possible if the person concerned feels no need for it. Motivation is therefore related to the social development strategies of individuals and of the groups to which they belong, and even to their views on the possibility of such a strategy. Making the adult a "co-producer" of his/her education rather than a passive consumer means devoting special attention to his/her readiness to learn, and therefore to his/her confidence in his/her own ability. In this respect, motivation is something to be consciously created.

3. MANAGING AND ORGANISING A FLEXIBLE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Adult education schemes are usually sponsored by voluntary associations. The advantage of this can be greater flexibility and mobilisation. The disadvantage is often a marked lack of resources and the rather marginal status of these schemes, even though, as in Spain, they may form part of a national network.

Designing a system on a scale commensurate with the estimated needs requires managerial and operating techniques different from those found in conventional education.

The need for proximity

By definition, the adults concerned cannot readily avail themselves of the conventional education system, which does not cater for their particular needs. Everything conspires to cut these people off from education: their social situation, their lack of schooling, sometimes accompanied by a series of failures, their limited financial resources, their geographical location, etc. No positive results can be achieved, therefore, unless all these variables are worked on in order to draw education closer to the people who need it.

Organising a multi-partnership

Adult education schemes involve numerous partners: economic and financial circles, charitable organisations, trade unions, political or religious bodies, and so on. Voluntary associations constitute an excellent social "relay" for the purpose of meeting individual and collective needs.

Moreover, such schemes may enjoy the co-operation of professional bodies such as radio stations, as in Malta, or television companies as in Ireland and Yugoslavia. In Belgium, an important role is played by creators.

What all these projects have in common is the fact that they bring educators into this multiple partnership and change the underlying rules not only by their presence, as mentioned in the section on target groups, but also by their types of action and the tools they use. These partnerships have the virtue of bringing different approaches into contact, not with the effect of impoverishing them through reductive synthesis but as a means of enabling them to be "translated" into a joint dynamic. Co-operation is not something that can simply be decreed. It must be rooted in a reality and should stem from the wishes of the partners concerned if it is to have a meaning.

The novelty for educators lies in this co-ordination and concerting of the efforts of the different parties, mainly for the purpose of drawing up rules clearly defining each partner's responsibilities and putting the rule into perspective "He who pays, commands".

Decompartmentalising education through twofold integration

The loss of the adult educators' monopoly is compelling them to amend the rules governing their integration into their environment.

Vertical integration is required as an antidote to the extreme compartmentalising of education. Although there are some exceptions, such as Portugal and the United Kingdom, in most countries adult education is the last education sector not to be fully integrated into education in general.

It is desirable to decompartmentalise and seek areas of complementarity with existing educational and vocational training programmes, so as to provide passage-ways and thus create an educational continuum into which participants can enter at any point. In Limerick (Ireland), the idea is to diversify educational provision in such a way that it can meet not only the needs of women from the poorest neighbourhoods but also the aspirations of those who decide to resume their education for reasons of self-fulfilment. Complementarity should be sought particularly between socialising education and vocational training, precisely because they do not pursue the same objectives.

The horizontal integration of the schemes observed is justified by the fact that they are not intended to be independent of other work being done with the same populations and their environment. At Helmond (Netherlands), local firms are canvassed; this illustrates the value of involving staff responsible for recruitment and, more generally, economic circles possessing the requisites for job training (finance, instructors etc. ..), in comparison with which adult education is merely a cultural activity devoid of resources. In Ireland, older people are considered in their rural environment, in the same way as ethnic minority groups are in their London suburbs. Setting education in its environment is a new task for educators, who previously adopted a technical approach, whether occupationally or socio-culturally oriented. They, like their new partners, must now learn one another's languages and methods.

Rethinking the concept of education centre

The aim is not to encourage people in difficulty to go back to school. It is to release administrative logic to a subordinate place and, with the help of users, place all educational resources at the disposal of the schemes concerned, thereby turning educational facilities into resource centres where people go in search of the materials and help they need. Several such experiments are under way, particularly in the United Kingdom, to improve management of and access to these resources. One involves setting up computerised data banks which will eventually be accessible for consultation from home. Another consists in organising the different opportunities in the form of a "tree" or "chart" so as to give users a clearer picture of how the different courses fit together and help them pass more easily from one module or institution to another thanks to a credit system.

Decentralising

Centralised planning and organisation is not the best way of catering for the needs of the populations concerned; the local dimension is fundamental. Traditional methods of educational planning are founded on macro-economic indicators (demographic data, for example) which are inadequate for the purpose of responding to the needs of specific groups or individuals.

Although guidelines issued at central government level may seem to provide a useful reference frame for those in the field, the example of the Laiko project in Lapland shows how they are modified when implemented at local level. The connection between projects and administrative systems is tenuous to say the least, with projects operating on the fringe of rules and regulations

that are too hide-bound to ensure the flexibility they ought to foster. A change is therefore necessary. There have been various interesting examples of decentralisation of decision-making powers, such as the setting up of programme committees in the Danish counties, which indicate that further efforts in this direction would be desirable.

Networking of initiatives

The primary function of a network is to centralise information and make it accessible to as many people as possible. This has been done in Malta for the long-term unemployed, with the creation of a data bank on organisation, programmes and entrance requirements, notably financial ones, in Malta and on the island of Gozo. This example demonstrates how soon such a scheme needs to be made the subject of co-operation with other institutions.

It is only in terms of this secondary function that one can really speak of a network. The aim is to organise a flexible flow of information. In contrast to a system of bureaucratic hierarchy, where the type and destination of the information provided are rigidly determined, the flow of information within a network is not predetermined. The multiple partnership obliges each operator to keep more and more fully in touch with a greater number and variety of partners, with different ways of working; such contacts cannot be codified.

The network system in Spain seemed to operate along similar lines to the franchising that has become common in the distribution sector. The aim is to award a "seal of approval" and ensure the requisite flexibility of action.

Only through this type of networking can co-ordination, consistency, capitalisation and, finally, dissemination be achieved.

The community development dimension

Networks are variable-geometry structures; only their ability to take root in a clearly identified reality gives them life and meaning and enables them, through their adaptability, to cope with new realities. The new "Social Innovation" policy introduced in The Netherlands adopts a comprehensive approach establishing close liaison between the different measures, including education and local development. In Limerick (Ireland) the following definition is given: a set of education and training programmes geographically based in a community, planned, developed and evaluated according to the educational needs of that community, through a partnership effort involving all interested parties in the community. This localisation is guaranteed to:

- bring together a maximum number of partners;
- build on existing personal and geographical relationships;
- stress negotiation rather than coercion;
- embrace a broader set of parameters;
- organise co-ordination of projects at both the planning and the implementation stages;
- develop pragmatic and evolutive solutions;
- accommodate and revitalise micro-cultures.

4. STRATEGIC GUIDELINES

This makes it possible to:

- combine the advantages of a strong local base with those of financial and organisational flexibility;
- exploit experiments by making them better known and using them for the training of educators and as models for further initiatives;
- offer the guarantee of a common methodological frame of reference;
- facilitate effective co-operation with more specialised organisations, in terms of information and reception as well as the fostering of reintegration;
- provide a means of developing a structured "educational continuum".

The role of the administration

The traditional forms of hierarchical organisation in education are unsuitable here. Public authorities are not always involved in the activities observed. They may, however, have a hand in fostering and supporting initiatives, which implies a radical change in administrative methods, based on a global, localised and consensual approach as well as on a co-ordinating role. Administrative authorities can keep an inventory of experiments and disseminate and promote them in order to encourage innovation.

There is thus a move away from quantitative control towards a more qualitative type centred on evaluation. Finally, administrative authorities can help to provide tools for educators (through training, for example) promote quality, analysis, planning, financing and so on.

Guidance tools

Spain and Portugal have emphasised the link between networking and the development of tools for operating networks:

- concerting the efforts of the partners involved so as to avoid the adverse effects of vertically divided sectoral interests;
- establishing co-ordination based on a clear division of responsibilities and frequent discussion of the objectives pursued and problems encountered;
- developing a system of pre-negotiated specifications and requirements;
- at the same time, developing a quality-oriented approach where educational bodies describe their services and commit themselves to providing them as described;
- defining and implementing effective means of establishing fruitful exchange between network members.

Project management

Austria has shown the specific nature of the task of running projects in the context of local and regional development schemes, where education is only one aspect of the venture. Such project management is a new and specialised task, based on three main types of approach:

- a socio-educational approach, focussed on problem groups;
- a job market-oriented approach, combining vocational training with practical experience;
- a community development approach, mobilising the populations concerned to initiate change.

Even in Portugal, however, where the notion of the educator as an agent of development is under discussion, this dimension has received too little backing, and as a result insufficient attention has been paid to it. For the time being, therefore, educators have no option but a trial-and-error approach to developing such new skills as:

- advising groups and individuals;
- mediating between groups with different interests in the decision-making process;
- facilitating participative communication on a local or regional basis;
- participation in problem evaluation;
- co-ordinating action on a basis of project management methodology;
- implementing new organisational frameworks.

Educational engineering

The way in which education is produced is being called in question. This is hardly surprising in a changing world where the "assembly line" approach is now being challenged. The notion of a logical and mechanical chain of events is being replaced by a more systemic approach. The training instructor is being asked to build systems and processes to measure. This new task entails educational engineering: the ability to grasp problems and construct suitable educational solutions. It means building specific tools and approaches at each of the following stages:

- analysis of demand and its context;
- definition of operational objectives;
- negotiation of specifications;
- project design (presentation and programming of operations; organisational methods; human, technological, material and financial resources);
- establishing of a system of information and communication between the parties involved;
- project management and co-ordination;
- implementation of a continuous evaluation system.

5. AN OPEN EDUCATION

Motivation

There is no such thing as a typical learner. Every adult has his own background, his own skills, his own attainments etc., and therefore his own pace of learning and his own attitudes and values with which he spontaneously assesses his environment and what goes on around him. Motivation is therefore the major challenge to be met. With little or no prior qualifications, a history of failure, an aversion to school education, etc., we cannot expect all adults to be equally and automatically keen to participate in educational projects. The first session of the university for the elderly in Slovenia (Yugoslavia) was attended only by retired people who already held diplomas.

Although the task of motivation cannot be resolved in the first stage of education, it is just as important to develop information and guidance, particularly for the more isolated populations, as well as improve conditions of access in both the physical and the socio-psychological sense (arousing interest). Ireland has emphasised the need for a relay person to establish reliable contact with the person or persons concerned, identify obstacles and prejudices and clearly define the role and nature of education in every situation.

Demand as a starting point

A training course is not a product intended for sale. It is the result of development research connected with the provision of a service. There are those, therefore, who advocate that people in charge of education schemes should adopt a marketing approach in order to achieve greater efficiency and relevance. Be that as it may, an analysis of needs is fundamental and cannot be dissociated from motivation. Educators must help individuals to express their needs, which are never clear and precise at the initial stage. They must then transform this confused and varied demand - sometimes within a couple of weeks, as in The Netherlands and France - into a concrete operational objective, preferably with a description of a desired, assessable result.

Such individualisation of training entails:

- allowing the individual to identify his own project;
- supporting him as he carries out the project;
- helping him to fit the different sequences together into a coherent whole.

A different way of organising work

This change contributes to a new distribution of the various educational tasks, while at the same time integrating the various reception and information functions into educational action. Two types of organisation have been identified in this connection.

The first arrangement, which is in fact the more widespread, involves integrating the two dimensions while possibly supplementing the educational team with psychologists or social workers.

The other arrangement revolves around the complementary functions of different institutions. In France, for example, an autonomous reception system has been set up which also plays a substantial part in programme design thanks to the dual expertise of its staff (psychologists and educators). The system thus combines three elements:

- the assessment centre, which organises personal and/or occupational assessments, provides its customers with guidance and helps them to make an informed choice;
- the personalised teaching workshop, which functions on an inter-institutional partnership basis in premises of limited capacity, offering short-term personalised training on a contractual basis;
- the "permanent centre", to which people can go for information, advice, training, follow-up, and evaluation and which is able to adapt to demand within a given sector and geographical area, whatever the projects, status, level, possibilities and constraints of the applicant.

This arrangement offers three advantages. First of all, it establishes a link between employment services and educators, bridging the gap between the two; second, it provides linkage between the different stages of education, guaranteeing project continuity throughout; and, finally, it provides the trainee with a "neutral" referee in the formal determination of his skills.

Reception: a decisive educational stage

It is unanimously agreed that the first stage, which is educational rather than purely administrative, is decisive for the applicant and should therefore be given special attention. Motivation, the prerequisite for successful learning, assumes various guises. In the case of study circles (Norway, Netherlands, Yugoslavia), it seems to be linked to the process of group joining as well as to expression of demand. In both, France and the United Kingdom, it revolves around a highly precise and formal contractual approach.

Recognition of existing attainments

According to the 1985 Danish Parliament programme, "the qualifications and skills of adults shall be taken into account regardless of how they were achieved". It is universally recognised that the process of acquiring knowledge and experience is not confined to the classroom context. It is therefore essential to enable people to assess their own qualifications and have them recognised, not only when wishing to undertake new training but also when applying for employment.

Wirral College in Liverpool (United Kingdom) offers its students an information and documentation centre providing a number of services:

- information and advice on college courses;
- vocational guidance, with a data bank on local employment opportunities;
- evaluation of previously acquired knowledge and experience;
- aptitude evaluation on request;
- independent study: access to documentation, videos and audio tapes for those wishing to work alone;
- individual support:
- rooms for independent study with the assistance of a tutor;
- step-by-step accreditation for each completed programme unit;
- personal progress reports.

6. LEARNER-CENTRED ACTION

Eliminating the subject-based approach

The principle is to make the adult the co-author of his own training, rather than a passive consumer. It is therefore out of the question to determine course content without regard for learners' own expectations, which do not relate to course content per se, but rather to the understanding of their environment and the development of appropriate patterns of action. In addition to readiness and ability on the part of the educator to get learners to express their expectations, this implies two important things. First of all, a reversal of the usual approach: instead of attempting to sell a ready-made product, the product is co-produced with its "consumer"; this modifies the educator's role and hence the division of labour in this sector. Next, the various needs have to be graded and satisfied; this means a form of course organisation that is independent of traditional subject-based progression.

If the objective is to acquire means of reasoning and tools of formalisation, there can be no question of using subjects that cannot be understood without these very attainments. Course content must be designed and handled according to what people consider important in their everyday lives. This brings us back to the need to develop the marketing of education in order to: analyse demand, pinpoint needs and classify them into short-, medium- and long-term priorities; negotiate objectives and the most appropriate ways of achieving them; and assess progress in a continuous manner.

Programme flexibility

In many cases, each group functions at its own pace. Some study circle organisers have emphasised the importance of launching these circles one after the other. When the group is formed, generally on the basis of co-optation, several consultations with the tutor take place to determine the most appropriate time-scale and, where possible, the optimum venue.

At this stage, only the concept of an actual learning programme exists; the process of shaping it entails compromise between individual needs and group expectations. One of the tasks of the tutor is therefore to ensure the coherence of the educational unit, while leaving it to the group's own dynamic to enhance that coherence.

Building on experience

The notion of experience, particularly the sharing of experience, becomes central here in relation to any objective subject-matter. What two such apparently different groups as the elderly and the long-term unemployed have in common is a wealth of personal experience in comparison with the meagreness of their theoretical knowledge. It is often in the light of this experience that they analyse their own situation, including their past and present education.

One way of bringing this dimension into play is illustrated by the "life history" technique, which is fairly formalised in The Netherlands (Wouv-Vletchwerk) and in Sweden. This technique is somewhat ambiguous in its therapeutic dimension, since neither the expertise nor the resources it presupposes are to be found in the educational environment. Once this limitation has been accepted, however, the technique can prove very useful in group work, as it enables individuals to view themselves in the context of their own past. Could this be a basis for personal development, complementary to the development based on hurdle-jumping? It is probably too early to tell.

Enhancement of intellectual tools

Experience alone, of course, is not a sufficient basis. Solving the type of problems involved in education requires a certain command of intellectual tools, which is something the learner's past experience has not necessarily prepared him for, particularly when he has had little schooling and his occupational experience has been limited to tasks based on immediate perception rather than on calculation and abstract reasoning.

In all the cases observed, the educational process involved the development of intellectual tools and an improved command of cognitive skills with a view to putting them into practice. Apart from the experiments in memory training (Switzerland) and the stimulation of cognitive activities (Italy), an interesting illustration is the "Housing Project" in Brussels, where older people are asked to propose solutions to their housing problem that depart from the traditional choice between staying at home or going to an institution.

Working on oral expression

Verbal expression should be recognised as one of the primary objectives of adult education, in contrast to other education systems which often concentrate exclusively on the written word. Verbal expression is all the more important as it entails group interaction and encourages a group approach to problem-solving.

Working on conceptions and values

To focus education on the individual is to take into account not only his academic achievements but also the way in which he has constructed his life - in other words, his social achievements. In this context the educator's work is based both on conceptions and on values.

Learning means moving on from mental images to the abstract conceptualisations enabling experiential data to be inter-related and models drawn up. It is therefore a dual process involving the dismantling of one thought process and the construction of a new one upon which new knowledge can be built. This dimension seemed to be present in the training courses offered to both groups studied, whereas work on values is confined to schemes for the elderly. In language courses and art classes held in universities or at the study circles or meetings of ethnic minorities in the London suburbs, work on values is used to question people's interpretations of social realities and the types of behaviour they induce.

Education for the whole person

Traditional teaching methods generally focus on abstraction. The physical dimension should not, however, be ignored, even though it has so far been considered almost exclusively in gymnastic or "keep fit" terms. The "geography" or layout of the classroom also plays an important role in integrating participants into a group where they can see and be seen. The body and its clothing are also areas that should be worked on because of the part they play in creating self-confidence as well as on account of their significance in social relations. Thinking on this subject might be pursued further by deeper analysis of the role of conviviality in adult education, of self-defence lessons for women in Ireland, of theatre groups for the elderly in Germany or of the use of puppets in Portugal.

7. A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO EDUCATION

The individual must be placed at the centre of the educational process. This means taking a person's knowledge, experience and ability to think in abstract terms as the starting point. It also means taking individual and collective realities as a basis.

At Hof (Germany), the teaching team also deals with problems of debt, housing, health and even drugs. In Spain, the Youth and Solidarity Group incorporates parents as well as the productive environment in its educational work. In Ireland, the whole neighbourhood participates in the organisation of educational work with women.

Making adults feel responsible

One university for the elderly has introduced the following stratagem to motivate its students: each year is treated as a "generation". At the end of each term, each student is issued with a certificate stating the "generation" to which he or she belongs. This is the educators' way of making these adults feel responsible towards their circle, their "generation" and the university as a whole.

The nature of the programmes should be determined in conjunction with the adults and related to their requirements. This is particularly important in the case of programmes designed for the more disadvantaged students, who are also the least motivated and the most wary of education schemes.

The concept of leader

In Yugoslavia, it was decided to appoint leaders. These are members of the group who volunteer or are co-opted to liaise between the group and the tutor as well as see to relations within the group. Their responsibilities are both organisational and pedagogical. They decide, with the tutor, when the study circle should start and finish, what subjects should be studied, how they should be studied, and so on.

Learning by discovery

Many learners are now being given a say in the choice of educational objectives, course content, learning tempo and learning methods and techniques. The situations differ considerably, however, from one case to another, and on courses for the long-term unemployed decision-making with regard to course content and learning methods is more a matter for the tutors, who select the material and tools to be used. This seems to have been confirmed by a certain preference for the study circle rather than the training course.

Using group dynamics

Educational schemes are developed mainly in groups. This means two things. First of all, the group is a place for comparing one's self-image and conceptions with those of others. The group also has a regulating and facilitating function. The training group must be used as an essential educational resource for reciprocal stimulation, the pooling of ideas and experiences and mutual assistance with learning.

Secondly, while techniques and media of a more individual nature may be used, this should be done within strictly defined limits.

Individualisation

The first concern is to enhance the role of the individual within the learning group. The primary objective should therefore be to encourage greater interactivity and better personal relations between the students. This is a way not only of encouraging members to remain with the group but also of attracting new members. It explains why individualisation is a central methodological concern of adult education authorities. The situations vary, however. In France, emphasis is placed on the fact that individualisation cannot be improvised. Four main approaches are employed to achieve it, namely:

- prior consultation/negotiation between the trainee and the trainer with a view to the traditional course content being replaced by objectives defined in terms of skills to be acquired;
- a new triangular approach to learning (trainee/subject of training/trainer), replacing the one-way linear transmission of knowledge with a guided give-and-take approach combining theory and practice, group work and individual work organised into modules that differ from one individual case to another;
- a looser training group structure, or even the complete dissolution of the group, as opposed to the old approach based on a homogeneous group structure;
- a new method of evaluation based on the educational process itself rather than on the knowledge acquired.

The return to project-based learning

Education can play a pivotal role in enabling the adult to restructure his experiences (characteristically a chaotic succession of short-term jobs, periods of unemployment and training courses) into a situation of improved employability by providing him with the means to make positive, dynamic use of such experiences. This approach requires the individual to have a clear understanding of this disjointedness in order to use it as a basis for formulating a personal project.

A project is always a compromise between personal aspirations and the constraints of reality. A project can also be divided into different phases and thus used at any time to assess the learner's progress.

In Liverpool, after undergoing a test to determine his level, each trainee in the self-service workshop works to a "personalised plan of action".

Finally, projects are often as individual as they are collective. In several cases, particularly in the workers' production co-operatives in Ireland or Portugal, the pedagogical approach adopted is to develop autonomy by promoting a sense of responsibility in the individual, not only in respect of his own production but also in respect of that of his group or firm? In both Deventer and Hof, whether the activity is boat-building or railway carriage-repairing, it is a collective effort by the team as a whole. In certain training schemes, therefore, the concept of project takes on a new dimension.

Developing multi-resource systems

The variety of learners and their expectations makes it desirable to diversify educational arrangements as fully as possible. It is rather through complementarity between a range of approaches that adult education schemes can improve their performance. This means linking the different forms of education together, as in the case of the "education continuum" in Limerick or the study circles in Norway.

This linkage should not, however, be limited to the educational level. Links with the world of work should also be encouraged through in-service training or alternate periods of training and employment. France particularly stressed the need for the trainee to understand the purpose of the various stages of his training, be they initial contact with the working environment, definition of a projet, confirmation thereof, deepening of knowledge, etc. Finally, those responsible for the Helmond project pointed out the absurdity of a system that automatically postpones employment and places it after the educational phases (refresher training/preliminary training/qualifying training) when this approach has already proved unsuccessful; work is in fact the main aim of unemployed adults, who see it as their fundamental means of reintegration.

At the college in Liverpool and in most university courses for older people, studies are broken down into modules (ie training sequences constituting a homogeneous unit and quantified according to the number of hours' work). This enables the learner to compose his own "menu" and timetable according to his personal needs and possibilities.

Encouraging creativity in adult education

We have seen what a wide variety of methods are used in adult education, no doubt due to a lack of professionalism on the part of educators (a point to which we shall be returning). However, where attempts are made to exploit this diversity systematically, we feel they contribute greatly to the exploration and creation of non-conventional learning methods.

Careful attention should be paid to the adaptability, flexibility and versatility of the methods used, so as to make sure they are based on the adults' own experience and enhance it as a key means of the learners' progression.

8. ADAPTING RESOURCES TO ADULT EDUCATION

Flexible duration

Learners themselves should determine the duration of their training, firstly because different people learn at different speeds, but also because arranging a training programme with the help of the parties concerned is in itself a time-consuming process. Accordingly, the need was felt in Deventer (Netherlands) to divide the process into several stages and sometimes negotiate an overall package with the authorities for the setting up of the group.

Suitable premises

Because of its haphazard resources, adult education is usually dispensed on premises other than those used for general education or vocational training. A lack of space and the obsolescence of what little equipment there is are examples of the general dearth of facilities, which is obviously to be deplored. It does, however, offer one undeniable advantage in that the premises used do not arouse the same feelings of rejection as school environments. Moreover, they are more familiar and accessible to the adult. This is especially true when the teams involved take the trouble to make them pleasant, congenial places. In any case, the very concept of educational premises becomes irrelevant when any venue, be it a workplace, public library, municipal building and so on, can be used for educational purposes. Finally, many educators have emphasised the need for on-the-spot child-minding facilities and, especially when the trainees are long-term unemployed in search of work, for access to telephones, photocopiers and the like.

Using the mass media

In Malta, the adult education unit has concluded an agreement with the national radio station, Xandir Malta, for broadcasting a general cultural programme in three series: one on the social sciences, another on the basic economics of everyday life, and the third on Maltese-language literature. The interesting thing about this experiment is not so much the diversity of the methods used as the formation of a "listeners' club".

Television seems better suited to programmes for older people, although we came across only two instances of this, in Ireland and Yugoslavia. And even in these cases, the aim was not so much to educate as to communicate with people living on their own.

As for new information and communication technologies, these are as scarce as adult education resources in general. Examples such as that of Finland, however, suggest that this possibility might be worth closer examination in the context of multi-resource systems designed to make education accessible to all while gradually reducing the cost of producing and disseminating it.

Ensuring equality

Access is a priority consideration in the design of educational schemes. There are, of course, many obstacles in the way of adult participation: physical, financial and behavioural obstacles, a lack of motivation stemming from a lack of self-confidence and repeated failure, difficulties in reading and writing etc.

Such difficulties are not only personal, they are also linked to the education system itself. In Lancaster, physically handicapped learners had difficulty - despite their high motivation - in getting to places which were not wheelchair-accessible. Courses are sometimes organised without regard to learners' circumstances (searching for work, demands of parenthood etc.). They may be cancelled because of insufficient enrolments. It is for educators to address such problems, and we have seen ways in which this has been successfully done.

Yet, as the list of obstacles shows, education is not very highly thought of by society; it is seen as a secondary activity, especially perhaps for the most deprived groups. In these circumstances, it is clear that restoring education to its status as a necessary activity is a task in which all involved in adult education, including managers and administrators, should participate.

Improving general access to education will doubtless require a period of positive discrimination in favour of the most disadvantaged groups. Yet overcoming some of the obstacles we noted will also require a legal measure, formalising adults' right of access to education. Hence the need for legislation providing adults with educational rights similar to those already enjoyed by children.

Providing sufficient resources

The common denominator of adult education schemes is their precarious financial basis. If we accept that adult education should be expanded, a redistribution of funds by means of budget transfers should be envisaged, for, according to Germany and the Netherlands, adult education can help to reduce certain indirect costs connected with social handicaps in general. This redistribution should also allow for the fact that it is impossible for governments to increase their spending in this sector to the extent required. Any funds thus made available could be invested either on a collective basis (adult education projects) or on an individual basis (system of "vouchers" or "training cheques").

9. GIVING A CENTRAL ROLE TO EVALUATION

Evaluation by trainers and trainees is an integral part of learner-centred education. As such, it cannot be dissociated from other stages of the process. The learner must be able to evaluate his progress throughout his training.

Evaluation is thus:

- an instrument for regulating the educational process and determining the suitability of content, methods and techniques;
- a means for the learner to monitor his progress and determine what corrective action (if any) should be taken.

Evaluating people

There are three aspects to be considered:

- Have the learners acquired the expected knowledge and know-how?
- Can they apply what they have learnt?
- Have their individual performances been improved?

Evaluation should enable the individual learner to measure his own progress. A certificate of some sort should be issued so that learners have some record of their achievements for future use. Such accreditation would be instrumental in the twofold integration already discussed. Ideally, therefore, it should be flexible and take the form of a system of cumulative units/credits, a portfolio of skills etc. Efforts should also be made to secure the recognition of qualifications on a European scale.

Evaluating actions

Certain conditions must be fulfilled:

- evaluation is a strategic tool separate from testing or quantitative analysis;
- it is not restricted to experts alone;
- it should be a continuous process, and the data gathered should be regularly used to make the appropriate adjustments;
- the participants should have a clear idea of its purpose;
- its criteria should be fixed by all the parties;
- allowance should also be made for unforeseen aspects.

The objective is not to help inactive people to kill time, nor just to provide them with knowledge, but to contribute to their socialisation. Bearing this in mind, the following evaluation criteria could be considered:

- the existence of good relations within the group;
- involvement in outside activities (showing that education is an integral part of everyday life);
- and finally, as in Ireland, increased participation in community activities, improved awareness of possibilities available, and a co-operative approach to the development of suitable strategies.

Evaluating policies

On this less charted subject, note may be taken of two fundamental ideas:

- Firstly, there is a need to anticipate policies in order to evaluate them correctly; only by precisely defining the objectives, it is hoped to attain through a given measure can these objectives subsequently be used as evaluation criteria.

- Secondly, there is the idea, expounded in The Netherlands and Germany, that education helps to lower social costs (alcoholism, over-medication, delinquency, etc.).

Another evaluation criterion, based on the Spanish example in San Cebrian de Campos, could be the effect of education in decreasing emigration.

10. PROFESSIONALISING ADULT EDUCATORS

Different professional categories

Adult education schemes are run by a wide variety of partners (including unpaid volunteers) who are often recruited through informal channels - as though co-optation were the best guarantee here, too. However, adult educators can be divided into the following main categories:

- a big category consists of young people at the start of their working lives;
- another category comprises teachers taking time away from the mainstream education system, as in Portugal or Yugoslavia, where teachers can be seconded for this purpose;
- a third category is made up, as in the United Kingdom, Germany and France, of teachers performing their regular duties, even though adult education differs somewhat from the usual practices;
- a fourth category consists of paid or unpaid volunteers from various groups or associations, who are generally older than those in the other categories.

The question of voluntary work

This question arises when teaching teams need to be expanded and, for that purpose, are opened up to outside co-operation. Mention has already been made of the relevance of ensuring that education schemes are firmly rooted in voluntary associations; these play a vital role in the expression and shaping of group needs and in the identification of areas to be addressed by educational projects.

It is interesting to note that an overlapping of the two groups concerned occurs here, since some of these volunteers are elderly people. Sometimes they are also former trainees, as in Limerick, where former trainees, particularly those who have attended several courses, are involved in defining needs, organising courses and recruiting new participants.

Such involvement should be actively encouraged, as it shows a desire to participate in community life. However, it should be made the subject of a formal contract specifying the professional qualifications required and the nature of the functions to be performed.

At the same time, the role of voluntary associations should be properly organised. In particular, the energy, enthusiasm and charisma of certain volunteers, although qualities of great importance to adult education, are not transferable. Raising adult education to a higher level would require such transferability, which can be ensured only by professionalisation.

The multiple functions of adult educators

The adult educators' role used to be simply to transmit and disseminate formal knowledge. Nowadays, they are also expected to be the architects and designers of education, engineers for the construction of complex systems made up of a variety of different components, consultants, guides, efficiency analysts and assessors.

Their role is thus evolving both upwards and downwards, while a new division of labour seems to be emerging around three aspects:

- "system", centred on teaching and management;
- "approach", centred on complex social processes;
- "relationship" (internal/external), centred on links with social groups.

In these multiple functions, however, it is important to recognise that staff who are not actual tutors nevertheless have an educational function. People concerned with the reception of new learners, administration, management, support etc. are also parties to the educational process and, as such, they too require training.

Professionalism

There is no reason to believe that just anybody can teach or that all experience is instructive. Education is not something that can be improvised. Precise skills and responsibilities are required, viz:

- receptiveness to the expectations and demands of adult learners;
- ability to assess the adult learner's potential for progress and hence identify stumbling blocks;
- familiarity with a variety of methods, and the ability to choose, combine, or improve them as required;
- ability to work as part of a team.

One requirement often mentioned in this context is that tutors should be chosen for their ability to motivate adults and help them develop their own motivation. The demand for professionalism is thus - in theory, at any rate - very strong. Contracts between the various parties should clearly state what is, and is not, required of each one.

Tutoring

The concept of tutor throws specific light on several of the functions mentioned above. For example, a tutor is an advisor, responsible for identifying problems; he is a group leader who should be able to kindle motivation and activate the group's dynamics; he is a resource person, able to establish contacts; he knows how to employ various strategies to promote individual and group progress; and he can also evaluate. One of his essential roles is to develop team spirit, which does not arise spontaneously but requires skilled nurturing.

Professional status and career

There are two snags to adult education as a career: too much mobility or, on the contrary, too rigid a status. In either case, there is a risk that, as this type of education develops, two highly polarised sectors will emerge: educators for high-level groups and educators for disadvantaged groups. There also seems to be a high turnover in this profession. In certain cases, the profession is a stepping stone onto the job market for young graduates; in other cases, as in Portugal, teachers are often on secondment from the regular education system. Although such mobility has its advantages, it should be more carefully controlled.

Only if mobility is recognised and supported by appropriate training arrangements can these risks be avoided. The adult education environment would be improved if encouragement were given to:

- a continuous training structure (study modules, transfer possibilities etc.);
- job mobility;
- in-service training.

Professionalisation

Most educators are not specifically trained for the jobs they do, even though this lack of professionalism is often attenuated by their enthusiasm or even activism. Accordingly, adult education staff often have to learn the basics of their job as they go along, and cope with situations they have not been prepared for.

While adult education is demanding in terms of innovativeness and self-training, it also involves a dispersal of energy and sometimes gives an unpleasant sense of discovering things that are already known. This is why training programmes for volunteers must be developed.

One solution lies in the approach adopted at Deventer (Netherlands), where regular team meetings are held to take stock of the situation and work out responses together.

Portugal is a half-way house: its Directorate General for Adult Education encourages the collection and exchange of experience. Maximum efficiency is attained by this approach in countries where the administrative position of teachers allows for methodological work.

A further solution is in-service training for educators. Certain countries (The Netherlands, Nordic countries, Switzerland, Yugoslavia) provide basic training for adult educators.

A role for universities

In many countries - Malta, Switzerland and Yugoslavia have provided interesting examples - universities and other institutes of higher education participate indirectly in adult education. Training courses culminate in certification and lead to the training of adult educators. University research can also play an important part by analysing adults' learning processes, carrying out evaluation and assisting with curriculum design - provided that too rigid a division of labour between academics and practitioners is avoided.

Today research plays a fundamental role in developing adult education. It should therefore be encouraged, for example in respect of the particular aspects of adult learning and the role of the group, as well as in such fields as international comparison of rights, financing arrangements and evaluation methods.

This in turn should lead us to encourage the evaluation, enhancement and comparison of experience, the publication and dissemination of innovations and so on. Such tasks call for skills, methods and work procedures with which universities are familiar and to which they can make a positive contribution.

What kind of training for adult educators?

The Kapellerput scheme in the Netherlands provides us with the following list:

- the aims and purposes of permanent education;
- anthropo-cultural frameworks;
- general teaching and the specific needs of adult learners;
- group work and individual help;
- teamwork.

Switzerland stressed four other features:

- developing teachers' knowledge of themselves and of their own limitations;
- developing their educational engineering and objective-negotiation skills;
- capitalising on experience;
- using research as a working instrument.

Clearing houses and resource centres

Finally, in this or that subject area, it seemed desirable for educators to have access to a place where they could exchange views or seek information and advice on their projects, ie resource centres. The resource centres at Kapellerput in the Netherlands and Kungälv in Sweden provided us with models for studying this question further. The Swedish example, with its role as a permanent training centre and clearing house for educational data and advice for the Nordic Council, has made it possible to gauge the potential value of such arrangements on a broader scale.

CONCLUSIONS

The main purpose of the type of adult education outlined here is to provide people with greater continuous control over their personal, professional and social lives, thereby enabling them to make an effective contribution to the social and economic progress of the community. It should focus not only on professional qualifications but also on social, civic and cultural skills which used to be adequately covered by basic education but now need permanent updating.

Every society, in order to survive and thrive, demands certain skills of its members. Institutions have been formed to impart these skills. Until recently, the school and family environments were together able to perform this function during childhood and adolescence. However, the nature and magnitude of recent social changes and the uncertainties arising from them have rendered these institutions inadequate for the task.

Adult education has become necessary to fill this gap, particularly for those with the greatest problems of social integration, who are also the first to be affected by social change. No society can turn its back on whole sections of the population, particularly as the numbers involved are bound to increase. This is not a moral question, but concerns the survival of democracy itself. We are now experiencing on a general scale a phenomenon already familiar to certain firms in both the East and the West, which are having to retrain their personnel if they are to remain viable.

Adult education may now be regarded as the answer to this need for the continuous resocialisation and retraining of society's citizens.

It still has to be constructed as a social system. This can be achieved by making it an autonomous form of education and not, as has been done so far, by adding to it various components of differing degrees of coherence. Several elements are already available, scattered throughout the different countries. What is required now is that - as has already occurred in some industries - a vast restructuring should be undertaken in order to transform disparate elements into an autonomous, efficient and relevant system. This in turn can only be properly evaluated by an appropriate, purposeful policy, which should also ensure the necessary legislative and financial provision. This is one of the main findings of the two topic groups.

It should also be borne in mind that the different points set out in this report are far from amounting to a fully coherent system. In particular, some practical means need to be found for co-ordinating and dovetailing this system with the other information-producing and society-regulating systems.

Finally, it should be emphasised once again that much of the contents in this report will not be completely new to educators. Much of the ground covered here has already been charted by educational theorists, particularly by the pioneers of permanent education. However, although "autonomous, comprehensive education for adults" is not a new concept, it is today increasingly perceived as an open and flexible means by which the ad hoc and piecemeal schemes of the past few years can be organised into a more coherent and effective whole.

As stated in the first part of the report, social change is merely a sign of a developing society. The transitional phase we are now going through is full of uncertainties regarding the future. The only thing we do know for sure is that this is no superficial change but a radical and extremely rapid transformation of social structures and processes. Education is therefore one of the cornerstones of social regulation in that it enables women and men to seize all the opportunities arising from these upheavals. The nature of adult education will thus depend considerably on the type of society we wish to promote and hence on the degree of democracy and the degree of equality of opportunity for people to exercise their freedoms and rights.